

# **Social housing tenants act to combat climate change**

**Cecodhas workshop  
Brussels 1 October 2007**

**Training for Energy Efficiency  
Know-how from & for Social Housing Organisations**

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# Bond Beter Leefmilieu



Federation of the Flemish environmental movement



Representing some 140 environmental groups in Flanders

Non government, non profit organisation

35 employees

Projects

Policy

Support for member groups



# Klimaatwijken - Energy neighbourhoods



Bet between groups of citizens and their councils



‘Reduce energy consumption by 8% in the heating period’ (nov-apr)

- Basically only acting on behaviour
  - Reading energy meters every week at the same time
  - Energy saving tips (washing, cooking, standby,...)
- Only minor investments
  - Energy saving light bulbs
  - Water and energy saving shower heads
  - Heat reflecting radiator sheets
  - Insulation of hot water piping
  - Draftstrips



## Energy neighbourhoods: partners



- Groups of citizens, not necessarily physical neighbourhoods
- Voluntary energy masters
  - link between BBL, city council and groups
  - trained by BBL
- City councils
  - set up of start, intermediary and final meeting
  - prices to win by families winning the bet
- Provinces
  - logistical and financial support
- Grid companies
  - logistical and financial support as part of public service obligations
- Bond Beter Leefmilieu and member organisations



## Energy neighbourhoods: results



Started winter 2003-2004



- 13 communities, 16 groups, 316 families
- saving on average 6,8%, 128 of the families saved over 8%

Winter 2006-2007

- 76 communities, 206 groups, 2159 families
- saving on average 9,63%, 768 of the families saved over 8%
- saving 1000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>

300 energy masters have been trained



## Social energy neighbourhoods



More and more families have problems paying their energy bills because of rapidly rising energy prices



Liberalisation puts many of them in the cold

Set up of energy neighbourhoods to measure for poor people

- Local social aid departments, social housing companies, neighbourhood social workers
- Professional social workers instead of volunteers
- Energy scans
- Energy games



## Social energy neighbourhoods: results



Try out winter 2006-2007



- 16 organisations, 21 groups, 200 families
- saving on average 7,55%, 95 of the families saved over 8%

Social workers were hesitant to bring families together  
In the end they often organised more intermediary meetings than expected

As a result people in 'difficult' neighbourhoods start

- talking to each other
- give advice on energy but also other issues
- have neighbourhood barbecues
- help each other out when moving,



## Social energy neighbourhoods: results



In the end social workers seemed pleased with the results also for themselves



- Better contact with 'clients'
  - More positive relationship, social workers and clients get to know each other in a different way
  - Training gives them more information to help people to avoid financial and energy problems
- People solve their own problems with neighbours
  - They call less upon social workers to intermediate in conflicts
- More open communication with social housing companies
  - Structural problems in the homes
  - Preparation of renovation (rent, duration of lease)





# European energy neighbourhoods



European project from this autumn



Partners in

- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom



## More information



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